Ally Frese 2/24/2010

AP English

Ms. Schmidt

**A Balance of Competition**

My fellow classmates, students, and competitors, I am here to speak today about the evolving nature of competition—“A contest between individuals, groups, nations, or animals, for a territory, position, or location of resources.“ (Wikipedia)— and how it partakes in the lives of each of us sitting in this room. We have long been familiar with different acts of competition and we will remain competitors until the day we pass away and say goodbye to our bloodthirsty and aggressive population.

Humankind is driven by a world obsessed with powerful acts of competition. Beginning when we are born and lasting our entire lives, different forms of competition lurk at every corner. With each biological step we take competition will be at our heels and we will forever be left with some form of adversary in our hearts and souls. So lets take the time to recognize the frequency of competition in our lives and discuss the flaws and favors this form of behavior brings to our world.

It is first necessary to discuss the different forms of this act. You see, competition isn’t only found in standard activities and events such as sports games presidential elections, and television series such as “Hells Kitchen”. There is an internal competition that exists within each individual ignited out of love, hate, strife, passion, envy, loss, and triumph.

We are *all* secret competitors.

Driving down the highway a striking beamer speeds by you in the fast lane; a yearning to go faster is automatically ignited and the desire to stop for a car wash and waxing job becomes a necessity. Believe it or not my friend, you have a hunger to compete with this flawless BMW whether you know it or not.

This inner competition can be found in places such as the grocery store, on a nice summer’s jog, during a test, in chorus class, while shopping for both grocery’s and clothes, on Facebook, on the treadmill at the gym, in gym class, while watching a movie, reading a magazine, or laying in the sun waiting to see who can get the darkest tan. Not one of you can deny the craving to compete in one of these instances. Competition lives in everything and we can run but not hide from this from this universally accepted and frequently practiced act.

Now, my friends, there is also the form of competition that we all spend hours of each day focusing on. When most of us think about competition we automatically reflect upon games such as basketball games, soccer games, ping pong tournaments, video games and yes high school bowl matches. Non of us can deny our obsession with games, whether we’d be cheering for on favorite team on T.V. or playing ourselves our, time of leisure is dominated by games. What is it that makes these games so irresistible?

The constant need to compete.

Within each high school, teachers compete based upon strategy and reflection of students, students compete with each other for class rank, and sports teams compete to win shorelines and states.

Within each college, students compete for acceptance, faculty competes for job position, and sports teams and colleges themselves compete for the highest ranking.

Within each workforce, applicants compete for jobs, employees compete for pay, and businesses compete for business.

Within our very own nation political parties compete for legislation and approval of ideas and opinions, families compete for financial comfort and stability, and individuals compete for there own being and the ultimate goal to succeed and not be looked over as another number.

Personally I am not much of a competitor. I am uncomfortable with the pressure and scared of the adversary. I would much rather do yoga then compete in a race. Sometimes I see this as a flaw while others times I value this quality. Competition can be scary and generate rivalry but it also helps to strengthen oneself through either loss or gain.

So let us ask ourselves as we sit here eager to recite these speeches competing against Mrs. Schmidt’s rigorous standards: Is this competitive nature sustainable in our current society? In one hand, competition holds opposition, rivalry, and insecurity and in the other it holds motivation, drive, and dominance. It is difficult to determine whether competition will help or hurt our society and I am here to tell you all today that balance is key to success. With the perfect balance of competition will come a lifestyle respected by all. We cannot become infatuate with trying to prove ourselves better nor can we loose the motivation to better ourselves.

Thank you all